

REMARKS

Claims 1 - 18 are now pending in the application. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

DRAWINGS

The drawings stand objected to for certain informalities. Applicants have attached a Request for Approval of Drawing Changes in which a revised drawing for the Examiner's approval is attached. In the revised drawing, the legend "Prior Art" has been added to Figure 8 in red, in accordance with the Examiner's instructions. Favorable consideration of this Drawing Change is respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

A. Claims 1-2, 6, 8 to 10 and 12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over AAPR (Applicants' admitted Prior Art shown at least in Figure 8 and specification 2 and 3, hereinafter AAPR) and further in view of Masaki et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,271,907 B1) herein after Masaki. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner alleges that the AAPR does not specifically describe an end sealing material curing step of curing the end sealing material after the end sealing material removal step. The Examiner further alleges that Masaki teaches an end sealing material curing step of curing the end sealing material after the end sealing material removal step to avoid any interaction between the extra sealant present and the liquid crystal material, and therefore, it would have been obvious to include Masaki's

curing step after the removal in the AAPR's method to avoid any interaction between the extra sealant present and the liquid crystal material.

Applicants respectfully assert, however, that Masaki does not teach an end sealing material removing step as called for in independent claim 1, and therefore, the alleged combination proposed by the Examiner is improper. More particularly, referring to column 6, lines 52-62, Masaki merely describes the removal of excess liquid crystal.

"Specifically, the data-side substrate 4 is cut off along a scribing line 101 (as shown in FIGS. 10A and 10B) to expose and protrude an end portion (lower side in the figures) of the scanning-side substrate 1, thus exposing the scanning electrodes there at which scanning electrodes can be electrically connected with TAB films (as external drive circuits). Thereafter, a portion of the liquid crystal attached to the exposed end portion of the scanning-side substrate 1 is wiped off with a cotton swap 102 optionally impregnated with a prescribed (wiping) solvent (as shown in FIGS. 11A and 11B)." (emphasis added)

In contrast, the claimed invention calls for an end-sealing material removing step of removing at least a part of the end-sealing material bleeding outside a contour of the liquid crystal panel. As Masaki merely teaches the removal of excess liquid crystal, there is no motivation or suggestion to look to the teachings contained Masaki in order to modify the teachings of the AAPR to arrive at the claimed method of removing a portion of the end sealing material prior to curing the end sealing material. Moreover,

neither the AAPR nor Masaki teach the removal of the end sealing material before it has been cured, as claimed. More specifically, the AAPR teaches that the end sealing material is removed after it has been cured and, as stated above, Masaki merely teaches the removal of excess liquid crystal. The alleged combination of the AAPR and Masaki, therefore, does not yield the claimed invention. As such, Applicants respectfully assert that neither the AAPR, Masaki, nor any combination thereof teaches, suggests, or provides motivation to employ the claimed method, and thus, the claimed method of claim 1 is not obvious.

With respect to claim 6, the Examiner alleges that Masaki teaches wiping off the excess material with a cotton swab to remove only the excess material and without removing any other material, and therefore, it would have been obvious to include Masaki's wiping step in the AAPR's method to remove only the excess material and not material like a flattening film and/or color filters during the wiping and absorbing operations. Applicants respectfully assert, however, as stated above, that the AAPR teaches removing the end sealing material after the end sealing material has been cured. As such, using the wiping step taught by Masaki after the resin has been cured would not remove any excess end sealing material because the end sealing material has already been cured. The alleged modification of the AAPR with Masaki, therefore, does not yield the claimed method and is improper.

Further, the Examiner alleges that it is well settled law that the selection of any order of performing process steps is prima facie obvious in the absence of new or unexpected results. Applicants respectfully assert that the claimed method provides inherent and implicit advantages in that, by removing a portion of the end sealing

material prior to curing the end sealing material, damage such as microcracks in the delicate glass substrates are averted because a razor or some other device is not needed to “shave” the excess cured sealing material off of the substrates, it becomes easier to position other elements such as polarizers onto the substrates because there is no excess sealing material present, and the liquid crystal panel may be more easily positioned within a case body. As such, Applicants respectfully assert that claimed method is not prima facie obvious in view of these inherent and implicit advantages.

With respect to methods called for in claims 8, 10 and 12, these methods are also not obvious for at least the same reasons as stated above with respect to claims 1 and 6. That is, neither the AAPR, Masaki, nor any combination thereof provides any teaching, suggestion, or motivation to remove a portion of the sealing material prior to curing the sealing material. The AAPR teaches removal of the sealing material after the sealing material has been cured. Masaki teaches only the removal of excess liquid crystal. As such, the proposed modification of the AAPR with Masaki does not yield the claimed methods called for in claims 8, 10, and 12, and therefore, the claimed methods are not obvious.

B. Claims 3 to 5, 7 and 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over AAPR (Applicants’ admitted Prior Art shown at least in Figure 8 and specification pages 2 and 3, hereinafter (AAPR) and Masaki et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,271,907, herein after Masaki) as applied to claims 1 – 2 above and further in view of Forlini et al. (U.S. Patent No. 3,744,126, herein after Forlini). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 3-5 are dependent on independent claim 1 and claim 7 is dependent on independent claim 6, addressed above. Applicants respectfully assert that these claims are not obvious for at least the same reasons as their independent base claims.

With respect to claim 11, the Examiner alleges that claim 11 repeats the steps called for in claims 1 and 6 and is rejected for the same reasons. As stated above, claims 1 and 6 are not obvious because neither the AAPR, Masaki, nor any combination thereof yield the claimed methods. As such, claim 11 is not obvious for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

NEW CLAIMS

New Claims 13 – 18 have been added. These claims are fully supported by the specification and drawings as originally filed. No new matter has been added.[?]
Favorable consideration of these new claims is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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